



State of Arizona
Department of Education

Tom Horne
Superintendent of
Public Instruction

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MEMORANDUM

TO: School Health & Nutrition Program Sponsors

FROM: Mary Szafranski, Deputy Associate Superintendent
Arizona Department of Education, Health and Nutrition Services

Kacey Frey, NSLP Health Director
Arizona Department of Education, School Health & Nutrition Programs

DATE: January 7, 2008

SUBJECT: Alternate Menu Planning Approaches – Calories and Nutrient Standards

Original Signed

This memo serves as clarification of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) policy regarding the calories and nutrient requirements for meal planning using the alternate menu planning approach.

As background, section 9 of the National School Lunch Act mandates that school lunches and school breakfasts provide one-third and one-fourth of the daily recommended dietary allowances (RDAs) and calorie allowances when averaged over one week. The RDAs reflect the nutrient intake levels that meet the needs of most children by targeting nutrient levels needed not only to prevent nutrient deficiencies, but also to reduce the risk of chronic disease. These nutrient standards are found in 7 CFR 210.10(c) and (d) and 7 CFR 220.8(b) and (c).

Per 7 CFR 210.10(1)(4)(iii) and 7 CFR 220.78(h)(3)(iii), an alternate menu planning approach must meet the one-third and one-fourth RDA requirement for calories and the specified nutrients, indicate the age/grade groups served, and how much the nutrient levels are met for those age/grade groups.

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) may use established age/grade groups or create unique age/grade groups as part of the alternate menu planning approach. **However, regardless of the age/grade grouping, the meals must provide the minimum calorie and nutrient requirements.** Attached you will find a Standard RDA Data Set for each age level that indicates one-third and one-fourth calorie and nutrient requirements created by USDA. All USDA-approved nutrient software contains this data set to

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assist LEAs in determining the appropriate nutrient standards for any age/grade group based on the RDAs.

Any LEA interested in operating an alternate menu planning approach must obtain prior approval from the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). During the approval process the LEA must describe how they will monitor schools using the alternate approach to assure that the required calories and nutrient standards are met. This will be evaluated upon the School Meals Initiative Review completed by the ADE.

Until final regulations modify the calorie and nutrition standards, LEAs may not establish new calorie allowances and nutrient standards for protein, vitamins A and C, iron and calcium.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this memo, please contact your assigned School Health & Nutrition Program Specialist at 602-542-8700.

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